

**REMARKS**

As a preliminary matter, counsel for Applicants wish to express their gratitude for the Examiner taking the time to speak with counsel on Monday, August 16, 2004. Consistent with the telephone discussion, counsel respectfully requests the opportunity to have an interview with the Examiner at the time this case is taken up for action.

Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-16 are all the claims pending in the application.

Applicants have made non-narrowing, editorial amendments to Claims 1 and 15. Claims 12-14 have been amended to render them consistent with amended Claim 1. No new matter has been added.

At pages 2 and 3 of the Action, Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the relationship between the organic compound (a) selected from the group consisting of polymers, monomers, and oligomers and the composite material (b).

The particulate composite material (b), which comprises a layered inorganic compound having the organic compound inserted between its layers is only one component of the claimed at least one covering layer. The covering layer also includes an amount of the organic compound that has not inserted itself between the layers of the inorganic compound.

Thus, Claim 1 recites that the covering layer comprises organic compound (a) and composite material (b), wherein composite material (b) comprises a layered inorganic compound having a partial amount of organic compound (a) inserted between its layers. It is the non-inserted amount of organic compound (a) that mainly lends the covering layer with its extrudability for manufacturing the cable, as recited in the paragraph bridging pages 3 and 4 of the specification.

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As for Claim 15, it has been amended to clarify that the claimed method for manufacturing the cable does not include an isolated recovery of particulate composite material (b). Instead, by mixing the treated inorganic compound with the organic compound as recited in Claim 15, there is obtained a mixture of organic compound (a) and composite material (b), wherein composite material (b) comprises a partial amount of organic compound (a) inserted between the layers of the inorganic compound.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the §112, first paragraph, rejection.

At pages 3 through 5 of the Office Action, Claims 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kawasumi and Okada.

Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-11 have not been rejected over the prior art, and Claim 15 is drawn to a method of manufacturing the cable of any one of Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-11. Claim 16 depends from Claim 15. Thus, Claims 15 and 16 are directed to a method of making the product of any one of Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-11. Because Claims 15-16 depend from and thereby include all the limitations of Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-11, Kawasumi and Okada necessarily fail to render obvious Claims 15 and 16.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection.

Finally, at pages 5 and 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner refers to four documents. Applicants respectfully point out that, by virtue of their respective filing and publication dates, none of the documents qualify as prior art against the present application.

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, she is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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